



## Meeting Summary December 13, 2017

### Attendance

Panel Members: Don Taylor, Chair (recused for project #17-16)  
Bob Gorman, Vice Chair  
Hank Alinger (excused)  
Fred Marino (recused for project #17-16)  
Sujit Mishra  
Juan Rodriguez (recused for project #17-17)  
Julie Wilson

DPZ Staff: Valdis Lazdins, George Saliba, Yvette Zhou

**1. Call to Order** – DAP Chair Don Taylor opened the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

### **2. Review of Plan #17-16 Long Reach Village Center Redevelopment - Columbia, MD**

Developer: Orchard Development Corporation  
Owner: Howard County  
Architect: Design Collective, Inc.

### **Background**

The site, located at 8775 Cloudleap Court in Columbia, MD, is zoned New Town (NT) and is bounded by Route 175 to the west and Tamar Drive to the east. The project includes numerous parcels in the Long Reach Village Center (LRVC).

### **Applicant Presentation**

The applicant gave a multimedia overview of the project and stated that the design guidelines are being established to govern future development. The site plan may expand in the future if additional properties are acquired.

The project includes a village green and a pavilion to serve as a civic gathering space. The site will have approximately 75,000 SF of retail space, medical office, and food incubator space, with a vertical garden. There will be 132 units of market-rate multi-family housing, 120 units of senior multi-family housing, and 52 market rate townhomes. Most townhomes are three-stories with rear loaded, two car garages. Parking includes structured and surface parking spaces. The structured parking will be integral to the multi-family residential building and on-street, parallel parking is available for visitors.

Primary access to the site is from Cloudleap Court, with secondary access off Foreland Garth. The design guidelines call for short, walkable blocks and integrating complete streets concepts for pedestrians and bicyclists. Future direct access to Route 175 is being explored.

Street furnishings will be of durable materials with a uniform neutral brush aluminum look and wood will be incorporated to add warmth to the palette. A shared use path will be located along Tamar Drive and

the applicant hopes to locate a bike share station on the site. The proposed bus stop has been relocated to Cloudleap Court to better serve riders.

A passive green space is located between the senior residential building and the townhomes. An entry plaza at the access point from Foreland Garth will have decorative pavers and amenities, while the private street near the village green can be closed for special events.

The landscape guidelines promote bio-diversity with native and adaptive plantings.

Signage includes permanent, identification, directional, street, and banner signs.

### **Staff Presentation**

To help revitalize the village center, in 2014 and 2015 Howard County purchased 7.71 acres in the LRVC under the County's Urban Renewal Law. In 2015, after the purchase, the County held public meetings to engage the community in discussions about revitalization efforts and to get feedback as the Reimagine Long Reach Village Center Plan was being prepared. In accordance with the Reimagine plan, the County issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit developer interest to implement plan recommendations. After extensive review, the committee unanimously recommended the Orchard Development proposal as the preferred plan. The Planning Board reviewed and recommended approval of the Orchard Development Plan, which was subsequently adopted by the County Council as the Urban Renewal Project for the Long Reach Village Center.

The DAP is required to review the site plan and design guidelines as part of the major village center redevelopment process, outlined in the zoning regulations. Staff requested the DAP evaluate the site plan and design guidelines in the context of the Reimagine plan.

### **DAP Questions and Comments**

The DAP commended the overall design and noted the quality of the architecture, street design, and amenity spaces. The DAP asked about retail parking and the applicant responded that on-street, parallel parking and garage parking are provided. The DAP asked how many on-street parking spaces are included and the response was about 50. The DAP said it was important to allow visitors to quickly park and not have to choose a garage for short shopping trips. The applicant responded that a parking study will be conducted as the project moves forward. The DAP recommended as much on-street parking as space permits and to configure it so that it best aligns with primary site access drives.

The DAP asked if direct access from Tamar Drive could be added. The applicant responded that this has been considered, but depends on a number of factors, including land ownership.

The DAP asked about the pavilion, to which the applicant said, the pavilion would host smaller neighborhood functions and not large-scale concerts or events. They would like to collaborate with CA to program the space. The DAP agreed and said that due to nearby residential areas, large, noisy events would not be the best fit.

The DAP asked about sustainable design and features. The applicant said the buildings will be designed for LEED certification, that solar panels may be installed on the flat roof and there is potential for a roof top garden.

The DAP noted that the primary entrance from Cloudleap Court does not align with an existing road to the north of Cloudleap Court. The applicant responded that a better alignment would be possible if they can acquire some adjacent land.

### **DAP Motions for Recommendations**

DAP Vice Chair Bob Gorman made the following motion:

1. Explore right-in/right-out access off Tamar Drive and try to connect the main entrance off Cloudleap Court to Foreland Garth. Seconded by DAP member Julie Wilson.

Vote: 4-0 to approve

DAP Vice Chair Bob Gorman made the following motion:

2. Explore additional convenience surface parking by slightly reducing the size of the green space. Seconded by DAP member Julie Wilson.

Vote: 4-0 to approve

### **3. Review of Plan No. 17-17 River Hill Square – Clarksville, MD**

Owner: Stephen Klein & Associates

Developer: River Hill Square, LLC

Engineer: Bohler Engineering/Benchmark Engineering, Inc.

Architect: BCT Architects

#### **Applicant Presentation**

The applicant described the changes made to the plan since the project was first reviewed at the February 8, 2017, DAP meeting:

- Moving buildings closer to Clarksville Pike and reducing the amount of parking along the 108 road frontage.
- Increasing green space between Clarksville Pike and the proposed parking along the frontage.
- Anchoring development along Route 108 with two buildings that are positioned close to the road ROW.
- Increasing the width of internal sidewalks and providing an outdoor plaza.
- Additional landscaping.
- Special paving to enhance pedestrian areas and crosswalks.
- Decorative lighting.
- Improved architectural character and building materials.
- Better pathway connections.

The applicant provided an overview of the plan, which includes a central “Main Street” through the center of the site. It is intended as a vibrant space with active storefronts, decorative paving, wide sidewalks, outdoor seating, landscaping, lighting, and could be closed for special events.

The project includes two multi-tenant commercial buildings and two freestanding buildings. One multi-tenant building has 20,280-sf of retail space - including a garden center and post office. The second is 12,890-sf, with retail and restaurant space. The free-standing building at the north end of the site has 4,200-sf of retail space and the one at the south end is a 2,020-sf drive-through bank.

Consistent with the CPDG, the two free standing buildings at the front corners of the site have been pushed close to the Clarksville Pike setback line for a greater presence on the street. Parking has been dispersed throughout the site and not concentrated in one location.

The architecture has been completely changed and the character and materials pay attention to the CPDG and reflect an agrarian context. Materials include glass, stone, metal, and some brick. The buildings have been designed to be viewed from a 360-degree perspective.

Along the front of the site, 62 parking spaces are provided, which is less than 25% of all parking spaces. Landscaped islands are located throughout the parking areas.

Primary access off Clarksville Pike will remain at the current location, with minor reconfigurations. A new second access point is at a realigned intersection of Sheppard Lane and Clarksville Pike.

The streetscape along Clarksville Pike includes a multi-use pathway, stormwater management, street trees, and a hedge row, with perennials and grasses to screen parking.

The applicant will collaborate with the Columbia Association (CA) and community to allow the sidewalk in the rear parking lot to connect to the adjacent CA path.

The applicant intends to maintain the existing trees and board fence around the perimeter of the site and to enhance this buffer, where necessary, to screen adjacent properties.

### **Staff Presentation**

All written comments from the public have been provided to the DAP and applicant. The project is zoned B-1 and DAP recommendations are provided to the Planning Director. Staff requested the DAP evaluate and make recommendations on the site plan, streetscape, landscaping and hardscaping, and architecture. This includes development scale and materials, functionality of building services, and sustainable design elements. Staff also requested the DAP evaluate and make recommendations on the design of the primary entrance at Clarksville Pike; including any design elements, landscaping, or other features that may be appropriate and the scale of the pylon sign.

### **DAP Questions and Comments**

The DAP said the revised design is considerably better than the plan presented on February 8, 2017. But, they noted design improvements can still be made so the plan is even more consistent with the Clarksville Pike Streetscape Plan and Design Guidelines (CPDG).

### **Site Design**

The streetscape along Route 108 and internal to the site is significantly improved. A free-standing stone wall could be added along the frontage to strengthen an architectural presence on Clarksville Pike. The DAP encouraged using decorative pavers on Main Street and the flanking sidewalks.

Some DAP members felt the terminus of Main Street should be re-examined and suggested relocating the post office there as an anchor.

The DAP asked to explore moving one of the two “L” blocks of buildings forward, eliminating a row of parking. It would create a stronger presence along Rt. 108 and the bank building could potentially be attached. This would be more consistent with the CPDG and create more of a Main Street feel.

The DAP asked why the restaurant wasn’t located along the front of the site. They believed restaurants would be used more at night and could help activate the frontage, particularly if outdoor seating is included.

The DAP asked how many parking spaces there are and the response was that county regulations require 6 parking spaces per 1,000 sf of retail space and 7 spaces for the post office, resulting in 238 spaces. The site plan includes 241 spaces. DAP asked if shared parking could reduce the requirement, since the post office will not be open nights or weekends. In addition, the garden center site has significant storage. By reducing parking an expanded perimeter buffer and potentially other site improvements could be possible. DPZ commented that a shared parking analysis could be reviewed at the SDP phase.

The DAP recommended increasing perimeter landscaping and replacing or enhancing the existing fence, where needed, to screen nearby homes from car noise, light, and potential back of house views. The DAP recommended using indirect fixtures and fixtures with shields in locations where adjacent properties could be impacted by light trespass.

The DAP noted an inconsistency with the property boundary on the site plan. The applicant clarified that it was mistake and did not suggest that the property line was shifting.

Some DAP members felt there could be a queuing issue from Route 108 when making a right turn into the primary entrance. Allowing cars to come farther into the site before deciding on a turn might mitigate this.

The DAP asked if bike amenities are included and the applicant responded that the multi-use path along the 108 frontage provides connections for bicyclists and pedestrians into the center. Bike racks will be located at key points throughout the site.

#### Architecture

The DAP agreed the architecture, site plan and materials are a substantial improvement and do a much better job of respecting the CPDG. The architecture fits well with the agrarian history of Clarksville. The DAP recommended a clear delineation of the base, middle, and top of a building to be more consistent with the CPDG. The DAP asked if the 30' roof lines allow for a mezzanine or second level. The applicant responded that the peaked roofs are designed to break the 30' plane outlined in the CPDG and there is no plan for a second level.

The DAP noted that the post office has a back of house elevation that is likely visible from adjacent homes. They recommended the service area be better screened and encouraged the applicant to pay attention to the design of the building rear and service area.

#### **DAP Motions for Recommendations**

DAP Vice Chair Bob Gorman made the following motion:

1. Enhance the Main Street with special paving, lighting, and furnishings. Seconded by DAP member Julie Wilson.

Vote: 5-0 to approve

DAP Chair Don Taylor made the following motion:

2. Create a terminus at the end of Main Street, whether it is a building or some other focal point. Seconded by DAP Vice Chair Bob Gorman

Vote: 5-0 to approve

DAP member Fred Marino made the following motion:

3. Study whether a building block can be pulled forward and linked to the bank building. Seconded by DAP member Sujit Mishra.

Vote: 5-0 to approve

DAP member Julie Wilson following motion:

4. The rear of the garden center should be treated as well as the front facade or better screened from nearby homes. Seconded by DAP Vice Chair Bob Gorman.

Vote: 5-0 to approve

DAP Vice Chair Bob Gorman following motion:

5. Site lighting should be indirect and shielded from residential areas. Seconded by DAP member Julie Wilson.

Vote: 5-0 to approve

DAP Chair Don Taylor following motion:

6. The buffer on the southwest side of the site should be studied. Additional landscaping and fence should be added. Seconded by DAP member Julie Wilson.

Vote: 5-0 to approve

DAP member Julie Wilson following motion:

7. Evaluate the amount of required parking and any reduction should allow the buffer between the project and adjacent neighborhood to be expanded. Seconded by DAP Vice Chair Bob Gorman.

Vote: 5-0 to approve

DAP member Fred Marino following motion:

8. Achieve the recommendations of the guidelines by clearly delineating a building base, middle, and top and differentiating awnings and/or canopies along storefronts. Seconded by DAP Chair Don Taylor.

Vote: 5-0 to approve

#### **4. Other Business and Informational Items**

The next DAP meeting is scheduled for January 10, 2018.

#### **5. Call to Adjourn**

DAP Chair Don Taylor adjourned the meeting at 8:42p.m.